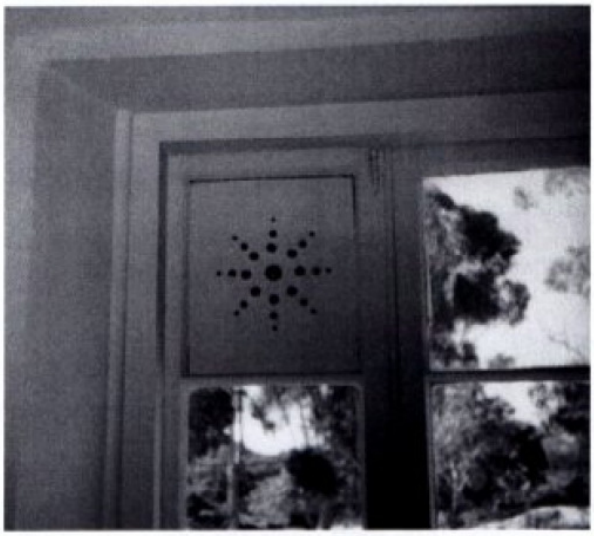
Stars and Finials

Brian Hennig has recently brought two items to our attention.

Inside the Peters Hill church he noticed something unusual about the windows. They are of casement style consisting of eight panels, with the glass panel in the top corner of each window being substituted with a timber panel. This panel had holes in it and was thus being used as a ventilation system to allow the building to breathe when not in use and locked up. On the outside a louvered panel was used to prevent rain from entering.

The holes on the inside panel were arranged as a series of concentric circles of decreasing size as they moved outwards. The final design represented an eight-pointed star (see photo below).



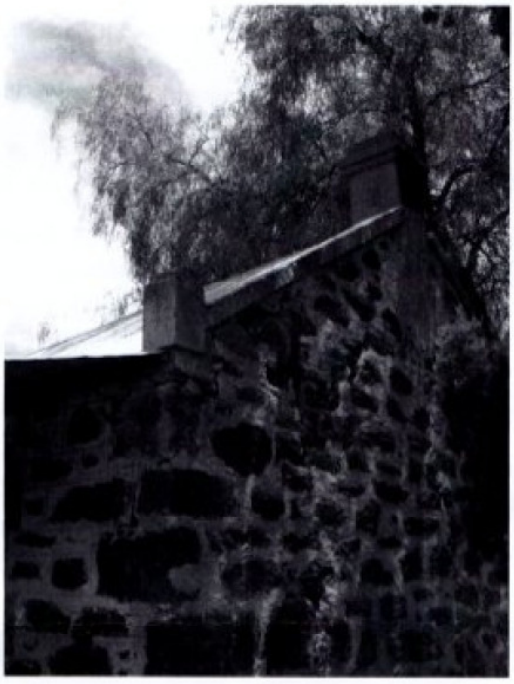
Some early Lutheran churches in South Australia had blue ceilings with stars painted on them. In the book, *Barossa Folk*, by Noris Ioannou, there is a photo of the ceiling of the Pilgrim Lutheran Church at Sandleton, which closed in 1961 (see page 305). It shows two eight-pointed stars on the blue ceiling. Ioannou stated that the eight-pointed stars symbolized divine guidance and the circles represented eternity and the everlasting God.

Reg Munchenberg also refers to these features in the Pilgrim church at Sandleton in his book, *Truro* (see pages 263-264). He says that the building's former owner, John Ward-Lohmeyer, had researched the church's history and John had claimed that the large star and the blue ceiling were Wendish features because of the number of Wendish settlers in that church.

Did the Peters Hill people have this in mind when they installed these window panels with the eight-pointed star design in their church? Unfortunately no-one can tell us today.

The other item relates to houses of Wendish settlers at St Kitts. Brian has noticed that at the top of the walls at the corners of the house (level with the roof gutters) there are small brick or stone cairns. I have called them finials. Why are they there? Is this some form of decoration? Did it have any significance for the Wends?

The old school building at Ebenezer, which was an early Wendish settlement, also has this feature (see photo below).



Has anyone else noticed these features? Can they be found elsewhere? Can you shed any light on them?

I hesitate to claim these as Wendish features when they may also be symbols found in other churches and cultures. I am looking for reliable evidence. Can they be found in Lusatia? Can anyone help?

Please contact the Editor (see address at the end of newsletter) if you have any further information on either of these items.